The Light in the Cl[illegible]earing

A TALE of the NORTH COUNTRY in the TIME of [illegible]ILAS WRIGHT

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BARTON AGAIN SEES SALLY DUNKELBERG, BUT THE MEETING IS NOT AN AUSPICIOUS ONE.

Synopsis.—Barton Baynes, an orphan, goes to live with his uncle, Peabody Baynes, and his Aunt Deel on a farm on Rattleroad, in a neighborhood called Lickitysplit, about the year 1826. He meets Sally Dunkelberg, about his own age, but socially of a class above the Bayneses, and is fascinated by her pretty face and fine clothes. Barton also meets Roving Kate, known in the neighborhood as the "Silent Woman." Amos Grimshaw, a young son of the richest man in the township, is a visitor at the Baynes home and Roving Kate tells the boys' fortunes, predicting a bright future for Barton and death on the gallows for Amos. Reproved for an act of boyish michief, Barton runs away, intending to make his home with the Dunkelbergs. He reached Canton and falls asleep on a porch. There is he found by Silas Wright, Jr., a man prominent in public affairs, who, knowing Peabody Baynes, takes Barton home after buying him new clothes.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

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Soon a horse and buggy came for us and I briefly answered Sally's good-bye before the man drove away with me. I remember telling him as we went on over the rough road, between fields of ripened grain, of my watermelon and my dog and my little pet hen.

I shall not try to describe that home coming. We found Aunt Deel in the road five miles from home. She had been calling and traveling from house to house most of the night, and I have never forgotten her joy at seeing me and her tender greeting. She got into the buggy and rode home with us, holding me in her lap. Uncle Peabody and one of our neighbors had been out in the woods all night with pine torches. I recall how, although excited by my return, he took off his hat at the sight of my new friend and said:

"Mr. Wright, I never wished that I lived in a palace until now."

He didn't notice me until I held up both feet and called: "Look a' there, Uncle Peabody."

Then he came and took me out of the buggy and I saw the tears in his eyes when he kissed me.

The man told of finding me on his little veranda, and I told of my ride with Dug Draper, after which Uncle Peabody said:

"I'm goin' to put in your hoss and feed him, Comptroller."

"And I'm goin' to cook the best dinner I ever cooked in my life," said Aunt Deel.

When the great man had gone Uncle Peabody took me in his lap and said very gently and with a serious look:

"You didn't think I meant it, did ye?—that you would have to go 'way from here?"

"I don't know," was my answer.

"'Course I didn't mean that. I just wanted ye to see that it wa'n't going to do for you to keep on tippin' things over so."

That evening as I was about to go up-stairs to bed, Aunt Deel said to my uncle:

"Do you remember what ol' Kate wrote down about him? This is his first peril an' he has met his first great man an' I can see that Sile Wright is kind o' fond o' him."

I went to sleep that night thinking of the strange, old, ragged, silent woman.

CHAPTER III.

We Go to Meeting and See Mr. Wright Again.

I had a chill that night and in the weeks that followed I was nearly burned up with lung fever. Doctor Clark came from Canton to see me every other day for a time and one evening Mr. Wright came with him and watched all night near my bedside.

In the morning he said that he could come the next Tuesday morning if we needed him and set out right after breakfast, in the dim dawn light, to walk to Canton.

"Peabody Baynes," said my Aunt Deel as she stood looking out of the window at Mr. Wright, "that is one of the grandest, splendidest men that I ever see or heard of. He's an awful smart man, an' a day o' his time is worth more'n a month of our'n, but he comes away off here to set up with a sick young one and walks back. Does beat all—don't it?—ayes!"

"If any one needs help Sile Wright is always on hand," said Uncle Peabody.

I was soon out of bed and he came no more to sit up with me.

When I was well again, Aunt Deel said one day: "Peabody Baynes, I ain't heard no preachin' since Mr. Pangborn died. I guess we better go down to Canton to meetin' some Sunday. If there ain't no minister Sile Wright always reads a sermon, if he's home, and the paper says he don't go 'way for a month yit. I kind o' feel the need of a good sermon—ayes!"

"All right. I'll hitch up the hosses and we'll go. We can start at eight o'clock and take a bite with us an' git back here by three."

I had told Aunt Deel what Sally had said of my personal appearance.

"Your coat is good enough for anybody—ayes!" said she. "I'll make you a pair o' breeches an' then I guess you won't have to be 'shamed no more."

She had spent several evenings making them out of an old gray flannel petticoat of hers and had put two pockets in them of which I was very proud. They came just to the tops of my shoes, which pleased me, for thereby the glory of my new shoes suffered no encroachment.

The next Sunday after they were finished we had preaching in the schoolhouse and I was eager to go and wear my wonderful trousers. Uncle Peabody said that he didn't know whether his leg would hold out or not "through a whole meetin'." His left leg was lame from a wrench and pained him if he sat long in one position. I greatly enjoyed this first public exhibition of my new trousers. I remember praying in silence, as we sat down, that Uncle Peabody's leg would hold out. Later, when the long sermon had begun to weary me, I prayed that it would not.

It was a beautiful summer morning as we drove down the hills and from the summit of the last high ridge we could see the smoke of a steamer looming over the St. Lawrence and the big buildings of Canton on the distant flats below us. My heart beat fast when I reflected that I should soon see Mr. Wright and the Dunkelbergs. I had lost a little of my interest in Sally. Still I felt sure that when she saw my new breeches she would conclude that I was a person not to be trifled with.

When we got to Canton people were flocking to the big stone Presbyterian church. It was what they called a "deacon's meeting." I remember that Mr. Wright read from the Scriptures, and having explained that there was no minister in the village, read one of Mr. Edwards' sermons, in the course of which I went to sleep on the arm of my aunt. She awoke me when the service had ended, and whispered:

"Come, we're goin' down to speak to Mr. Wright."

I remember Mr. Wright kissed me and said:

"Hello! Here's my boy in a new pair o' trousers!"

"Put yer hand in there," I said proudly, as I took my own hand out of one of my pockets, and pointed the way.

He did not accept the invitation, but laughed heartily and gave me a little hug.

When we went out of the church there stood Mr. and Mrs. Horace Dunkelberg, and Sally and some other children. It was a tragic moment for me when Sally laughed and ran behind her mother. Still worse was it when a couple of boys ran away crying, "Look at the breeches!"

I looked down at my breeches and wondered what was wrong with them. They seemed very splendid to me and yet I saw at once that they were not popular. I went close to my Aunt Deel and partly hid myself in her cloak. I heard Mrs. Dunkelberg say:

"Of course you'll come to dinner with us?"

For a second my hopes leaped high. I was hungry and visions of jelly cake and preserves rose before me. Of course there were the trousers, but perhaps Sally would get used to the trousers and ask me to play with her.

"Thank ye, but we've got a good ways to go and we fetched a bite with us—ayes!" said Aunt Deel.

Eagerly I awaited an invitation from the great Mrs. Dunkelberg that should be decisively urgent, but she only said:

"I'm very sorry you can't stay."

My hopes fell like bricks and vanished like bubbles.

The Dunkelbergs left us with pleasant words. They had asked me to shake hands with Sally, but I had clung to my aunt's cloak and firmly refused to make any advances. Slowly and without a word we walked across the park toward the tavern sheds.

We had started away up the South road when, to my surprise, Aunt Deel mildly attacked the Dunkelbergs.

"These 'here village folks like to be waited on—ayes!—an' they're awful anxious you should come to s[illegible] 'em when ye can't—ayes!—but wh[illegible] ye git to the village they ain't ni[illegible] so anxious—no they ain't!"

In the middle of the great ced[illegible] swamp near Little River Aunt De[illegible] got out the lunch basket and I sat down on the buggy bottom between their legs and leaning against the dash. So disposed we ate our luncheon of fried cakes and bread and butter and maple sugar and cheese. What an efficient cure for good health were the doughnuts and cheese and sugar, especially if they were mixed with the idleness of a Sunday. I had a headache also and soon fell asleep.

The sun was low when they awoke me in our dooryard.

I soon discovered that the Dunkelbergs had fallen from their high estate in our home and that Silas Wright, Jr., had taken their place in the conversation of Aunt Deel.

CHAPTER IV.

In the Light of the Candles.

One day the stage, on its way to Ballybeen, came to our house and left a box and a letter from Mr. Wright, addressed to my uncle, which read:

"Dear Sir—I send herewith a box of books and magazines in the hope that you or Miss Baynes will read them aloud to my little partner and in doing so get some enjoyment and profit for yourselves.

"Yours respectfully,

"S. WRIGHT, JR.

"P. S.—When the contents of the box have duly risen into your minds will you kindly see that it does a like service to your neighbors in School District No. 7? S. W. Jr."

"I guess Bart has made a friend o' this great man—sartin ayes!" said Aunt Deel. "I wonder who'll be the next one?"

The work of the day ended, the candles were grouped near the edge of the table and my aunt's armchair

She Had Spent Several Evenings Making Them Out of an Old Gray Flannel Petticoat.

was placed beside them. Then I sat on Uncle Peabody's lap by the fire or, as time went on, in my small chair beside him, while Aunt Deel adjusted her spectacles and began to read.

I remember vividly the evening we took out the books and tenderly felt their covers and read their titles. There were "Cruikshanks' Comic Almanac" and "Hood's Comic Annual"; tales by Washington Irving and James K. Paulding and Nathaniel Hawthorne and Miss Mitford and Miss Austin; the poems of John Milton and Felicia Hemans. Of the treasures in the box I have now in my possession: A life of Washington, "The Life and Writings of Doctor Duckworth," "The Stolen Child," by "John Galt, Esq."; "Rosine Laval," by "Mr. Smith"; Sermons and Essays by William Ellery Channing. We found in the box also, thirty numbers of the "United States Magazine and Democratic Review" and sundry copies of the "New York Mirror."

Aunt Deel began with "The Stolen Child." She read slowly and often paused for comment or explanation or laughter or to touch the corner of an eye with a corner of her handkerchief in moments when we were all deeply moved by the misfortunes of our favorite characters, which were acute and numerous.

In those magazines we read of the great West—"the poor [illegible] para-dise"—"the stoneless la[illegible] plenty"; of its delightful cl[illegible] of the ease with which the far[illegible]spered on its rich soil. Uncle Pea[illegible] spoke playfully of going West, after that, but Aunt Deel made no answer and concealed her opinion on that subject for a long time. As for myself, the reading had deepened my interest in the east and west and north and south and in the skies above them. How mysterious and inviting they had become!

One evening a neighbor had brought the Republican from the post-office. I opened it and read aloud these words in large type at the top of the page:

"Silas Wright Elected to the U. S. Senate."

"Well I want to know!" Uncle Peabody exclaimed. "That would make me forgit it if I was goin' to be hung. Go on and read what it says."

I read the choosing of our friend for the seat made vacant by the resignation of William L. Marcy, who had been elected governor, and the part which most impressed us were these words from a letter of Mr. Wright to Azariah Flagg of Albany, written when the former was asked to accept the place:

"I am too young and too poor for such an elevation. I have not had the experience in that great theater of politics to qualify me for a place so exalted and responsible. I prefer therefore the humbler position which I now occupy."

"That's his way," said Uncle Peabody. "They had hard work to convince him that he knew enough to be Surrogate."

"Big men have little conceit—ayes!" said Aunt Deel with a significant glance at me.

The candles had burned low and I was watching the shroud of one of them when there came a rap at the door. It was unusual for any one to come to our door in the evening and we were a bit startled. Uncle Peabody opened it and old Kate entered without speaking and nodded to my aunt and uncle and sat down by the fire. Vividly I remembered the day of the fortune-telling. The same gentle smile lighted her face as she looked at me. She held up her hand with four fingers spread above it.

"Ayes," said Aunt Deel, "there are four perils."

My aunt rose and went into the but'ry while I sat staring at the ragged old woman. Her hair was white now and partly covered by a worn and faded bonnet. Forbidding as she was I did not miss the sweetness in her smile and her blue eyes when she looked at me. Aunt Deel came with a plate of doughnuts and bread and butter and head cheese and said in a voice full of pity:

"Poor ol' Kate—ayes! Here's somethin' for ye—ayes!"

She turned to my uncle and said:

"Peabody Baynes, what'll we do—I'd like to know—ayes! She can't rove all night."

"I'll git some blankets an' make a bed for her, good 'nough for anybody, out in the hired man's room over the shed," said my uncle.

He brought the lantern—a little tower of perforated tin—and put a lighted candle inside of it. Then he beckoned to the stranger, who followed him out of the front door with the plate of food in her hands.

"Well I declare! It's a long time since she went up this road—ayes!" said Aunt Deel, yawning as she resumed her chair.

"Who is ol' Kate?" I asked.

"Oh, just a poor ol' crazy woman—wanders all 'round—ayes!"

"What made her crazy?"

"Oh, I guess somebody misused and deceived her when she was young—ayes! It's an awful wicked thing to do. Come, Bart—go right up to bed now. It's high time—ayes!"

"I want to wait 'til Uncle Peabody comes back," said I.

"Why?"

"I—I'm afraid she'll do somethin' to him."

"Nonsense! Ol' Kate is just as harmless as a kitten. You take your candle and go right up to bed—this minute—ayes!"

I went up-stairs with the candle and undressed very slowly and thoughtfully while I listened for the footsteps of my uncle. I did not get into bed until I heard him come in and blow out his lantern and start up the stairway. As he undressed he told me how for many years the strange woman had been roving in the roads "up hill and down dale, thousands an' thousands o' miles," and never reaching the end of her journey.

In a moment we heard a low wail above the sounds of the breeze that shook the leaves of the old "popple" tree above our roof.

"What's that?" I whispered.

"I guess it's ol' Kate ravin'," said Uncle Peabody.

It touched my heart and I lay listening for a time, but heard only the loud whisper of the popple leaves.

Barton becomes aware of the existence of a wonderful and mysterious power known as "Money," and learns some of the things that its possession may accomplish. Don't miss the next instalment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

If you would flatter a woman keep quiet and listen

Fish Day.

He—By jove, Betty, you look nice enough to eat. She—Well, don't forget this is Friday.—Boston Transcript.

Proving It.

Pussyfooting is a calamity."

"I suppose it is something of a catastrophe."

Tuition Will Be Free.

"She says she's going to give singing lessons." "She'd have to. Nobody'd ever pay her for them."

Authorities differ as to whether a poker room should be classed as an ante room or drawing room.

There is nothing more idiotic than the smile of a pretty girl—when directed toward some other fellow.

When a man begins to discuss matrimony with a widow the result is usually a tie.

Danger In Abbreviation.

Even the school nurse has her fun. In a talk before the central philanthropic council the other day, Miss Helen R. Stewart of the board of health told of one little boy who, after he had been examined by the nurse, went to the teacher in tears, complaining that the nurse called him names.

When the teacher expressed her surprise, the boy sought to prove his case by handing her the card the nurse had given to him as her record of the examination.

"Look at that!" he cried.

"Poor nut," read the card.

"Poor nutrition," explained the teacher, finally sending the child away with a better opinion of the nurse.—Dallas News.

Von Tirpitz a Pauper.

The Tribune de Geneve is informed that Grand Admiral von Tirpitz is staying at Wildegg. Switzerland, as the guest of Lieut.-Colonel Wille, son of the former commander-in-chief of the Swiss army.

Tirpitz has lost all his fortune. His son is a clerk in a bank at Zurich, and his daughter is a governess in a Zurich family.

To avoid paying the German war tax of 1913 Tirpitz invested his money in Italian securities, with the result that he is now penniless. What a patriot!

Information Needs Confirmation.

"Old Dorsey Dudgeon prides himself on knowing where the conflagration is as soon as he hears the fire-bell ring," related the landlord of the Petunia tavern.

"By the time half a dozen whangs have changed he has scrabbled into a garment or two and is out on his front porch, hollering to the people running by just where he knows the fire is."

"He should be of considerable assistance to the volunteer firemen and others in sending them in the proper direction," commented the interested guest.

"Eh-yah! He would be if he didn't nine times out of ten know it wrong."—Kansas City Star.

Glossing Over the Facts.

"Pa, what is a euphemism?"

"I'll have to explain that by giving you an example, son."

"Yes, pa."

"The dictionary says a euphemism is 'a figure of speech by which a word or phrase more agreeable or less offensive is substituted for one more accurately expressive of what is meant,' as in the case of the society reporter who states that a widow who has been married three or four times is 'led to the altar' by a wealthy old codger who never had the slightest notion of getting married until he faced the preacher."—Birmingham Age-Herald.